

The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 52, Vol. v.]

BELFAST, APRIL 1st, 1885.

[For Gratuitous Circulation.

THE Rev. J. C. Street acknowledges, with thanks, the receipt of 5/- from Miss Porter, 10/- from Mrs. Russell, 20/- from Mrs. Kirk, all of Belfast; 2/6 from Miss M. Stitt, of Bishops court; and 2/6 from Mr. Salsbury, Nottingham, in aid of the gratuitous publication and circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*, and will be glad of the opportunity of acknowledging other contributions for the same purpose.

THE Sunday Evening Lectures at Rosemary Street were very largely attended during the month of March. The first three Sundays were devoted to an examination of Professor Shedd's new defence of the "Doctrine of Eternal Punishment." On the fourth Sunday Mr. Street lectured on "Sin and its Consequences;" and on the last Sunday on "The Better Land."

THE special services for children were held at Rosemary Street on the first Sunday in March, and at Hopeton Street on the third Sunday in the same month. At Rosemary Street Mr. Darbishire read the service, and Rev. J. C. Street spoke on "The Life to Come." At Hopeton Street Miss J. E. Bruce read the lesson, and Rev. J. C. Street spoke on "The Cleansing of the Temple." There were excellent attendances at both services, and the children were attentive and interested.

WE are glad to learn that the Rev. Alfred Lancaster, of Stanhope Street, Belfast, has received and accepted a call to the ministry of the Killinchy congregation. Mr. Lancaster is an able and earnest worker, and will, we doubt not, prove an efficient successor to the warm-hearted and devoted Rev. John McCaw.

THE FORTHCOMING ANNIVERSARIES.

OUR expectation of the promised visit of Rev. Dr. G. V. Smith will not be realized, owing to the illness of a member of his family; but we hope, at no distant day, to offer a welcome to him in Belfast.

We are glad to announce that the Rev. Richard Pilcher, B.A., of Warrington, will preach the anniversary sermons on Sunday, May 3rd, in the morning in Second Rosemary Street, Belfast, and in the afternoon at Moneyrea; and that the Rev. J. C. Street will preach in Second Rosemary Street in the evening. Collections will be made on behalf of the Society. We are expecting representatives and visitors from England and Scotland. There will be a Welcome Breakfast as usual; and the Annual Meeting will take place on Monday evening, May 4th, in the lecture hall, Rosemary Street; and on Tuesday there will be a Sunday School Conference at Moneyrea. We hope all our friends will do their best to make the 54th anniversary of the Society a great success. Detailed announcements will be made in our next issue.

WE welcome with satisfaction a new volume of sermons by the late Rev. C. J. Perry, of Liverpool. The volume is neatly printed and bound, and is published at the small price of 1/3. The contents are varied and attractive. In these sermons the author's fine spiritual nature can be seen at its work in its highest moods; and every page gives rare promise of what such a nature might have accomplished had it been permitted to stay longer with us. There is such sweetness and tenderness of tone in these sermons that they cannot help but be warmly welcomed by reverent and religious-

minded men and women. They are not controversial, but eminently devout and practical. The sermons are well fitted for home-reading and for religious culture.

THE meetings of the Mutual Improvement Association continue to be well attended and full of interest. On the evening of March 2nd, a descriptive paper, entitled, "Notes on a Voyage to South Africa," was read by Mr. A. Millin. "Spiritualism" was the title of an interesting paper read by Mr. A. W. Grant, Glasgow, on the 9th. On the evening of the 16th, there were music and readings by members and friends. A series of short papers were read and discussed on the evening of the 23rd, Mr. F. E. Dale contributing one on the subject of "Freemasonry," and Mr. S. H. Street one on that of "Capital Punishment." On the same evening an anonymous paper on "Secret Societies" was also read. The discussions on the above subjects were lively and interesting.

In a report recently presented by the Superintendent to the Teachers of Hopeton Street School, the following passage occurs:—

The school has sustained a severe loss by the death of Mr. A. Robb, on the 22nd February. He became a teacher in 1877 or 1878; and as long as his health permitted, he was not only a regular and devoted teacher, but his earnest desire and conviction to do good led him to follow the scholars to their homes that he might influence them. He invited them to his house, made them prepare pieces to recite at the Band of Hope meetings, urged them to improve themselves, and told them of his own life and experience, that he might incite them to perseverance. He looked forward during the week to the Sunday, when he could lay aside thoughts of his hard week-day work; and he felt it only an interesting recreation, as also a privilege, to be able to work for the benefit of others. The Band of Hope, in which he took the deepest interest, has lost a most efficient worker.

On Friday evening, February 27th, the annual soiree of the Mountpottinger Unitarian

congregation was held in the church and school buildings. There was a numerous attendance. Tea was served in the school-room at seven o'clock, after which the members of the congregation and their guests assembled in the church, where appropriate addresses were delivered and musical selections were rendered. The Mayor (Mr. E. J. Harland, J.P.), presided, and delivered a genial address.

Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., and Rev. J. C. Street, delivered brief addresses, after which the Rev. W. Reynolds spoke as follows:—

Mr. Chairman and Christian Friends,—My speech must take a different turn to that of the orators who have preceded me; different indeed from my first or second intention; for although we are only about half-way through our meeting, my duty now is to show cause why we have met for an annual meeting to-night, why we have presumed to invite the highest dignitary in Belfast to preside over us, and to propose a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman for his presiding at our meeting and the thoughtful and practical speech with which he has honored us, and then to close the orations of the evening and introduce the minstrelsy and song so kindly provided for us by Mr. T. H. Ritchie. From the report already circulated, it will be seen that during the past year our church attained that era in its history when the ordinary income has balanced with the ordinary expenditure without making any special effort or appeal; that our congregation has increased, and our subscribers likewise; so that though we cannot boast the influence of the First or Second Congregation, yet our list of subscribers will compare most favorably with theirs in point of numbers; and as far as the attendance upon public worship is concerned, we are proud to say that our church is better filled on Sunday morning than any other church of our denomination in Ireland. And remembering that only about ten years ago this church was a mission school, held in a room of Dr. Ritchie's works, and now is an independent church, worshipping in this substantial and pretty little debt-free building, we think we can boast that our ten years' progress is not surpassed by that of any other Unitarian Church in the

country; therefore, though we cannot boast a historic past, we feel we are indeed the Church of the future. Our committee, therefore—and be it known that our committee is headed by the noble, benevolent and long-tried friend of the congregation, Dr. Ritchie, and that the worthy son of this worthy sire, Mr. T. Ritchie, is also a member of it—our committee, therefore, conscious of the good work done and progress made during the past year; conscious that for twelve months more we have been searching for the truth and trying to send its pure, unsullied rays into the minds of our fellow-men; that for twelve months more we have been trying to learn and do the right; that for twelve months more we have been bearing onward the banner of freedom and flinging off the fetters of superstition and error from our own souls and trying to help others to the enjoyment of the same liberty; that for twelve months more we have been inspired to good deeds by the example of our dear Master, Jesus Christ; that for twelve months more we have been holding communion with and drawing nearer and nearer to our God: conscious of all this, our committee has assembled us here to-night to report progress and gain stimulus for the year we have now entered; and when the instruments have poured forth their volume of harmony, and the angel voices of the sweet singers in Israel have billowed through this temple and vibrated in our hearts, we are sure our congregation will not be slow to join in a grand diapason of thankfulness to God, rolling forth to earth and heaven the glad-some pean of our gratitude and joy. Besides the progress we have referred to, we know full well that the truth, the right and liberty, are as sacred to our honored Chairman as to us; that these mottoes which glitter upon our banner also shine forth on his escutcheon; that the principles of his religion are the same as our own; therefore we thought it fit to invite such an one to preside over us, one who furnished employment for the noble sons of industry, and who commercially is the greatest benefactor and friend of the North of Ireland; one whom the Queen's Representative in Ireland delighted to honor as his host, and one

whom a higher still, the heir to this mighty empire, the Prince of Wales, is about to honor still more; one whom his Majesty the people, not even thus outdone, have unanimously raised to the highest honour in their gift, that of the civic chair of the hardy capital of the North. Considering how distinguished our Chairman is, some might think a more humble tone would become us; but we shrink from the fawning humility so common in our day, and we feel to deprecate ourselves would be to deprecate the honored Chairman who presides over us; and it is because we are conscious of our own honest worth that we have ventured to invite to preside over us one so honored in this town, one of such world-wide fame as Mr. E. J. Harland, J.P., the Mayor of Belfast. Nor do we think we are degrading the civic chair by so doing, but rather honoring it; for what higher honor can there be than to preside at the anniversary of a people whose religion is to know the truth, to do the right, and to bless the bodies and minds of mankind with the liberty of the sons of God, this liberty which is the birthright of humanity? Truth! Right! Liberty! What bosom does not heave, what heart does not throb quicker at the bare mention of these words? Truth! God-born, Christ-taught, prophet-heralded Truth! the Truth which Jesus said shall make us free. Right! the right of God to the love and services of man, the right of man to the love and care of God; the right of man to honest treatment from his fellow-men. Liberty! liberty of body—slavery banished from the world. Liberty of soul—the fetters of sin flying from off us. Liberty of mind—the right of every man to think for himself. Liberty of action—the right of every man to speak fact according to the dictates of his own conscience. Liberty! sacred liberty! which your own eloquent countryman, J. P. Curran, has declared to be “commensurate with, and inseparable from, British soil, which proclaims to the stranger and the sojourner that the moment he sets his foot on British earth, the ground on which he stands is holy and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter what com-

plexion, incompatible with freedom, an Indian or an African sun may have burnt upon him; no matter in what disastrous battle his freedom may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery, the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain the altar and the god sink together in the dust, his soul walks abroad in her own majesty, his body swells beyond the measure of his chains, which twist around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled by the irresistible gleams of universal emancipation." Is it not an honor, even for the noblest man, to preside at a red-letter day of a people of such aims and purposes; a congregation that is striving to rise above all the prejudices and narrownesses of sectarianism, and that seeks disinterestedly to catch the sunshine of eternal truth, and reflect its glorious rays into the dark corners of the minds of mankind; that seeks to know the right and impress it so upon men's minds as to make it the guiding principle of their lives; that seeks to give liberty to, and make it dear to, the hearts of all men? And most solemnly do we affirm that this is the great aim and purpose of this the congregation of the Mount-pottinger Unitarian Church. And, sir, most grateful indeed are we to you that, among your numerous and arduous engagements, you have given an evening to us, and honored us with your sympathetic presence and thoughtful address. We shall not forget your kindness, sir, and the honor thus done us; and be assured you have honored and helped a body of men and women whose aims are not selfish ones, but who here unite to live and labour

For the human ties that bind us;
 For the friends we leave behind us;
 For the wrongs that need resistance;
 For the weak that need assistance;
 For the future in the distance;
 For the good that we can do.

I have great pleasure, on behalf of this church and this meeting, to proffer you our best thanks for presiding over and addressing us this evening.

Mr. S. C. Davidson seconded the motion, which was carried by acclamation.

A well-selected musical programme was then admirably sustained, and the proceedings concluded shortly after ten o'clock.

AN EARNEST TEACHER AND HIS WORK.

BY THE REV. J. H. BIBBY.

THE views and opinions of an earnest teacher must always be helpful to those who are of like spirit, and I propose reading to you, in the form of a letter from a friend, what might be the story of any "fit and proper person" who is engaged in this our common work. The "friend" is an ideal, and some of his notions are idealistic; yet there is at the same time an air of the practical about him so as may be found round many of you who are here present.

Says my friend:—

The Sunday School I belonged to was a mission school in a wild low part of an iron-manufacturing town. I always had a wish to teach in that school, and happily for me my wish was early gratified. The first time it fell out so was when I was fifteen. I remember the time well; a stormy Sunday morning, one of those days which points out to you persons who are the salt of the earth. Now it happened that our school was well supplied with this same salt, for nearly all the teachers remained indoors that day from fear of being melted. But the scholars, God love them, came out as usual if only to get near the fire, to see the pictures, and hear the "music" play. That morning the superintendent had some generalship to do in the way of finding teachers for all the classes; and when he had joined the two worst classes in the school together, he came to where I sat as a scholar and said, "Now, John, come and help me out of my trouble, and take these lads and see what you can do with them."

I rose to my feet never doubting that I could do something; but when I saw the lads my heart fainted in me. However, there was no help for it; I needs must do it.

And I did it, sir, and from that day to this I have never missed a Sunday class for dear knows how many years.

I was surprised at the way I managed my work.

The creatures just laughed and cried and wondered and sighed as if they were made for

it. How did I manage it? Well, right in front of them I prayed that the right thing might be taught to them that day, and when we had done praying I took for my lesson the very first thing that came into my mind, just as if I believed the prayer was answered, only that some of the people you read this to will be shocked when you tell them that it was the story of "Jack the Giant Killer." That was my first lesson in any Sunday School; and the second was like to it, for the hero was again Jack, but this time 'twas he of beanstalk fame. On the first day I showed them how they might all be heroes in overcoming greed, ignorance, cruelty, laziness and filth, giants all stout and tall. On the second day I pointed out to them what industry would do; how they might climb their beanstalks.

Perhaps I was wrong in following my bent, for somehow or other I never seem to have quite grown out of my early belief in fairy stories; and even now, old a man as I am, I must own to a secret regard for the good little folk.

But right or wrong, I taught that class as if I were in earnest even about the fairies: with the result—and for the first time in its history—perfect quiet was kept, and ere long every man Jack of them slew his one giant, at least, of *dirty-face* or may be *late-comer*.

My stock of such stories was soon out, and in a little while I was able, by the use of such books as I will tell you of hereafter, to prepare fit lessons for my now thirty-boy-story class.

But never once did I forget to ask for a blessing on the lesson we were about to begin. Somehow the little fellows entered into it with more earnestness.

Time went on, and I went on with it—on to another class. A sort of awkward squad my new class was: for if any teacher had a lad that he could not manage, he had a fit of zeal for promoting that same lad to that same class. When I took it up there were three lads in it, all of them of what good Philip Carpenter used to call the monkey age—because of their imitativeness in mannish things—smoking, swearing and the like.

This was a trying class for me; for I soon

saw that I had got to mend my teaching ways or else fail miserably. However, we soon got on easy terms; for they saw that I was in earnest and would stand no nonsense.

To begin with, I told them that I wanted to know them and theirs; that I would like to know as much about their work and homes as they would care to tell me. At first it was hard work. Some of the poor fellows had homes that they might well be ashamed to speak of; but they would always talk to me freely about their work; and as I happen to know a little about most things, I was not hard to teach.

This was a great matter for the lads; for they got the notion that they were teaching me as well as I teaching them; and it was amusing sometimes to listen to them as they framed their annals of the workshop.

Of these three boys with which my work in that class began, there was one of most ungainly build and coarse in manner. Poor lad! I used to think he was so wicked because he felt that he looked loutish. He gave me a world of trouble, and to this day I am forced to write him down as *my* unmanageable scholar. But if I did not manage him somebody else did. This is how it came about. You must know that after a little while I told the lads that we should all of us be the better of having a larger class, and that if they would bring a new scholar apiece I would bring one, but it must be on condition that the new scholar was not taken away from any other school. In a very little while the class numbered nearly twenty; and, save the ugly duckling, a good score of lads they were. Whenever a lad interrupts in class I always make a point of stopping, even in the middle of a word, and without speaking, quietly waits on my young master's pleasure. If it be a question, well and good for us all; if the interruption be not a lawful one, so much the worse for him, for the stoppage in the lesson is sure to bring it before the notice of all. One day in particular I had been much beset by my one bad scholar; so much so that I had demeaned myself almost by losing my temper—tell your friends this is a sad thing to do before their

scholars. Relief came at last from an unlooked-for quarter. I stopped, as is my wont, until he had done his noise, when up spoke the smallest boy in the class: "Look here, if you stop the teacher again, we'll punch your head when we get you outside." "And so we will," said others. I never had any more trouble with that boy. He was shamed out of his ill-manners, and he is to-day an office-bearer in the school. But all this while I have not yet told you how I got such a hold on the affections of my young people. The *matter* of my teaching I leave you to guess from the list of books I have already promised; but, sir, I would have you speak a strong word to your friends about the *manner* of their teaching. I put down most of my success as a teacher to the manner in which I hold myself to the scholars under me. I try to be familiar and gentle with them. On no account do I allow a laugh to be raised against a scholar; it is better to avoid sarcasm. I give every boy credit for being good until I find him to be bad, and then after that I try to cultivate the charity that suffereth long and is kind.

If there be a chance of crediting a scholar with a good intention, even if his deed be wrong, I find it better to do so rather than to put it down to a low motive. I avoid sly ways before my scholars. I never give way to slang expressions. I shun cant as I would a snake.

Again, I have a very decided opinion about the regularity and punctuality of the teacher.

It is a boast of mine that during all the years of my Sunday School work, both boy and man, teacher and superintendent, never but once have I been late, and never absent save when the sea was between me and home.

This practical earnestness always has more influence over the boys than any number of spoken lessons. While by speech I made the lads feel that I was interested in them and their week-day doings, I showed them that I meant what I said by calling at their homes and asking them all in turns, by twos and threes, to come to my home.

Another thing I always think of importance is that a teacher should never on any account permit a scholar to pass by in the street without a smiling recognition. Nay, more than that,

I used to take them out with me for long country walks in the summer time. And good time we had when out. If any question arose we would sit down, *i.e.*, if the grass were dry enough, and quietly talk it over. Sometimes we would sing a favourite hymn, but on no account did I ever give any encouragement to the idea that I had my boys out for an oblique sermon or an additional Sunday School lesson. We met as boys and teacher, and in my own way I tried to be a boy with them. Why, bless you, sir, there wasn't a lad among them that would not have gone through fire and water for me. I trusted my scholars as if they were my own dear children. They come to me now when they are in trouble, and more than once they have confessed to me just as if I had been a priest. And on no single occasion do I remember when my trust was betrayed. They used my books and saw my pictures, but neither book nor picture bears mark of ill-usage to this day. And these boys, remember, are socially of the lowest grade; likely you have a similar class at the Hopeton Street or Stanhope Street Missions in Belfast, where I understand you are to read this letter of mine.

Well, that reminds me 'tis only a letter I am writing, and I must make an end. Before doing so, however, I think it would be helpful if you were to tell your friends how I managed with my young men's class. The elder scholar "problem," as it has been called, never offered itself to me as a problem at all. I just went to work as I had done with all my other classes—as if I were in earnest; and sure enough the young fellows gathered round me until there was not much more than standing room. Of course I had again to mend my teaching ways; and while I abominate the idle practice of reading round turn by turn in class, I thought it as well at first to let my young fellows make trial of that method. My first text-book was the Bible—and never a better one—and for a time we went on well. But I found that there was too much talk from me and not near enough from the class, nor could I draw them out. However, I soon managed this by quietly and privately pointing out to individuals where a single question on a certain verse, when we

reached that length in the chapter; would raise an interesting discussion. After this my work was much easier. Before long they volunteered papers on every imaginable subject between ethics and politics. *Here* in this class I kept up my visiting, and still continued my custom of having them home with me; and now positively some of them know so much good manners as not to eat with a knife! A fork is a magical civilizer! But this class was more of a commonwealth than either of my previous ones. I got them to elect a visiting committee of their own, and to appoint a secretary, and if any class-mate was unwell or in a strait, the matter was quietly taken note of, and in a small way we had a sort of "guild of the Good Shepherd;" the sick were visited and read to; they did not want for delicacies if they were needy; and whatsoever trouble any fell into, a kindly word was offered, and a helping hand held out. I am now a Sunday School superintendent, and I need hardly say that my best teachers have all sprung from that class, and the most earnest helpers our minister now has are of like training.

And now, sir, in conclusion let me give you some idea of the aids I used in this glorious work of mine. Of course the list can easily be added to, and I am too busy a man to give as full a list as might be. First of all, I place the Bible, not from any superstitious regard, but because I have a real solid respect for it and its sweet restful lessons; for the quaint turn it has given to my mother tongue; for the devotional spirit with which it is imbued; and while I do not think they "knew everything down in Judea," I am loth to go very far away from the green pastures and still waters by which the poet king sang. I like to smell the lilies of the field, and to hear the fowls of the air, which pleased the Master's path. Wondrous power there is still in that story of that quiet life, lived on Galilee's shores, and amongst its peaceful hills. The book containing these things I place in the first rank.

But there are a good many other books may be used to supplement this one; as, for instance, the series of lessons in religion by Mr. Armstrong; the theological lessons by Charles Beard; the lessons on the life of Jesus by Henry Shaen Solly; all of which appeared in Teachers' Notes, and may now be had for a shilling or two separately. I would also mention here that much help may be got from Brooke Herford's "Outline Lessons of the Life of Jesus," price 9d; Hopp's "Life of Jesus for Young Disciples," 1/-; Greg's "Scenes from Life of Jesus." There is also an almost

cyclopædic aid for the teacher in the Bible for Young People. At one time this was rather a large investment for a teacher to make, but lately, I believe, it may be bought new—the whole six volumes for 15/-. A book which ought not to be overlooked, although it comes late for my teaching days, is Professor Carpenter's "Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived," 1/- (all of which may be had in the Depository).

For very little ones, I have found that there is much help in that beautiful little book, "The Flock at the Fountain," in "The Gift of Life," and "Little Walter."

Here, then, was my working library for the scriptural part of my work; and I make as much use as I can, on every occasion that serves, to ground the boys in sound doctrine as I conceive it. Of course I do not neglect to tell them that before they are as old as I am they may see fit to change their opinion; but meanwhile I teach our own theology to them to serve till that time come. Speaking for myself, I am content to leave scientific subjects to other teachers' and other places than the Sunday School. One grain of life-teaching is worth a bushel of ill-taught science. Astronomy, Physiology, Botany, I have been too busy a man to bother much about; and till I know more I think silence more becoming. Perhaps it would not be a bad thing if others would follow my example. But where the teacher does know his subject, my experience has been that of unfeigned delight on the part of the scholars. However, this is an edged tool and will cut the clumsy teacher ill; or worse still, will hurt the scholar most deeply. At the same time, I must frankly tell you that I have seen the natural science subjects so deftly handled that the scholars have listened as if they were in fairyland. Happy the school whose teachers can so work. Well, to make my list more complete, I may mention the excellent list of science and literature primers published by Macmillan, all at 1/- each; not forgetting, however, Clodd's excellent works, "The Childhood of the World," and the "Childhood of Religion."

And now I have done; and in conclusion let me express a hearty wish that your meeting may be a helpful one.

My last word to you all is, be in earnest; for earnestness will cover a multitude of deficiencies.

TREASURER of Unitarian Society begs to acknowledge receipt of the following subscriptions:—

James Logan, Carrickfergus, ..	..	£0	2	6
W. Barron, ..	..	0	2	6
J. E. Adamson, ..	..	0	2	6
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W. A. Adamson, ..	..	0	2	6
Rev. J. A. Kelly, Rademon, ..	..	0	2	6
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THIRTEENTH SESSION, 1884-85.

PROGRAMME UNTIL END OF SESSION.

1885.
April 6.—Easter Monday—No Meeting.
" 13.—Paper, "Modern Economic Legislation." Mr. Thomas
Harrison, B.A.
" 20.—Annual Business Meeting and Soiree.
The Annual Concert will be held during this portion of the Session
as usual.

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ARE
The intellectual and moral advancement
of its members, and the furtherance of
fellowship and acquaintance among them.

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